

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *MICROMYTILUS FRANCISENSIS*  
COTTON 1931 IN WESTERN PORT, VICTORIA<sup>1</sup>

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During a recent survey (reported elsewhere in this number) of the molluscs around Crib Point in the North Arm of Western Port, Victoria, thirty-six live individuals of the bivalve *Micromytilus francisensis* Cotton (1931: 336, fig. 6) were collected. This is the first record of the species from Victoria.

Previous records of the distribution of *M. francisensis* have been confined to South Australia, where the species appears to be widespread. The South Australian Museum has specimens labelled 'cotypes' and collected from St. Francis Island, Kingston Beach, Cape Jaffa (90 fathoms) and Guichen Bay beach. Recent collections made in South Australia by Dr. B. Smith and Mr. R. Burn, from the National Museum of Victoria, have produced specimens from Robe (Guichen Bay) and Port MacDonnell.

In Western Port, the individuals collected in 1965 were taken at various localities, along the western edge of North Arm and adjacent to the two central spits, where the water is shallow and the substratum is of fine sand and mud. Subsequent benthic investigations, undertaken during 1973-4, have shown that the species is also widespread on the extensive tidal flats to the north of French Island. In these shallow-water and intertidal environments, the molluscs appear to live amongst weeds and bryozoa.

Although only recently discovered in Western Port, *M. francisensis* cannot be considered as rare within the bay. In the 1965 survey individuals of this species contributed approximately 1% of all the mollusc individuals collected, and during the 1973-4 survey provided 2.7% of the molluscs taken. These figures show it to be more abundant than many other species taken in the surveys. In the 1965 survey only 26 of the 121 species collected were represented by 1% or more of the total number of individuals taken, and in the 1973-4 survey only 20 of the 97 species found provided 1% or more of the individuals collected.

Dr. Winston Ponder of the Australian Museum, Sydney, has compared specimens taken in Western Port with a photograph of the holotype (a worn, single valve) and the present author has compared Western Port specimens with South Australian material provided by Mr. W. Zeidler of the South Australian Museum, Adelaide. In both cases the hinge line was observed to be weaker in the Western Port material.

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TEXT FIGURE 1. *Micromytilus francisensis*. Internal and external views of the left shell valve of a specimen from Western Port, Victoria. Shell length 1.5mm.

#### REFERENCE

- COTTON, B. C., 1931. Pelecypoda of the Flindersian Region, Southern Australia, No. 2. *Rec. S. Austr. Mus.*, 4(3): 333-354.